

The One With Seinfeld

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Category: Friends, Seinfeld

Language: English

Characters: Ross G.

Status: Completed

Published: 2000-04-15 09:00:00

Updated: 2000-04-15 09:00:00

Packaged: 2016-04-27 15:40:46

Rating: K+

Chapters: 1

Words: 6,217

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Repost, no new text. Friends/Seinfeld; Ross abandons the group, Chandler tries to propose to Monica

The One With Seinfeld

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**Classification: **Friends/Seinfeld Crossover

**Summary: **Ross abandons the gang, after they say things that really hurt him. Meanwhile, Chandler keeps trying to ask Monica to marry him, but something always keeps getting in the way.

**Title: **The One With Seinfeld

* * *

><p>Ross Geller was running late. But then nowadays, it seemed like he was always running late.<p>

As he entered the Central Perk coffee shop, he noticed that his five best friends in the entire world were already present, sitting on the couch and chairs. His sister Monica Geller; his best friend Chandler Bing; his ex-wife Rachel Green; and his other two friends, Joey Tribbiani and Phoebe Buffay.

Joey asked, "Where's Ross?"

Chandler replied, "He must be running late. Ah, paleontology - I bet it never gives you a moment's rest!"

Joey started to complain, "I know man, but he's always runnin' late! We were supposed to go see the Knicks game last night too. He was totally whinin' to me again about givin' up a career in the game..."

At this point none of them had seen Ross, who was standing behind them. As he started to open his mouth, Rachel said, "Well, at least you weren't married to him! I mean, thank God all of that's finally over! What was I even thinking? I mean, Ross? The geek with too much hair gel, who cheated on me with that slut of a Xerox copy girl? Drunken mistake doesn't even BEGIN to cover it..."

Ross shut his mouth in surprised shock. Chandler put in, "Hey, but that was only one night! At least you didn't have to spend 4 years in college with him - and that air purifier from hell of his!"

All five groaned in sympathy. Monica then said, "Hey, that's my brother!" Then she paused and said, "Besides, I had to live with him for 16 years, if anyone has the right to complain about him and all of his bad habits it's me!"

The others muttered, "Yeah,", "Right,", "Good point..."

Rachel then asked Phoebe who so far hadn't said anything, "Pheebs, sweetie, what about you?"

The blonde girl leaned forward eagerly. "Yeah, sure, I wanna be part of this 'we hate Ross!' thing! Umm, oh, oh! His boring science talk, it makes you wanna become extinct not to have to hear it! And, and, I really don't like his music anymore!" Everyone groaned again, nodding in complete agreement.

* * *

><p>Ross had backed away silently, then he noticed the manager of Central Perk, Gunther Lockhart, was watching him and listening to the conversation. They made eye contact for a few moments, before Ross turned away and went out the door. Suddenly he reappeared at the entrance, and gestured for Gunther to come out and join him.<p>

Gunther came out, a bit unsure what to do. He had always disliked Ross - hated might also not be too strong a word - but now for the first time in his life, he put his feelings on hold and listened to what Ross had to say.

Ross said, not looking at Gunther, "We both heard that, right? Uh - can you do me a favor?"

"What?" said Gunther.

"You never saw me, alright? I-I was never here today."

"Look," said Gunther, "I don't know, I don't wanna get involved - but if they ask me..."

Ross cut him off and said emotionlessly, "Gunther, if they know I heard all that they'll just get upset. It'll be worse than that time you didn't keep your mouth shut to Rachel, about Chloe and me when we were on that stupid break. You owe me...and her. So please, just do this."

Gunther grudgingly said, "All right. For Rachel."

Ross looked at him curiously, then shrugged. "Okay. Good. See you around," and he left.

"Hope not, you dino geek..." Gunther mumbled, before he went back inside.

* * *

><p>Ross didn't know how he was feeling. Angry? Hurt? Betrayed? The list was endless.<p>

He walked the streets aimlessly for hours, eventually wandering out of the Greenwich Village. The five friends didn't think of him; they all had other things on their minds.

Joey was having a one-night stand with a girl he'd met, who worked at a strip club.

Rachel was pulling an all-nighter at work on fashion design with her colleagues, in Ralph Lauren's private office.

Phoebe was cleansing her old roommate Denise's aura, and working on a do-it-yourself cure for attracting lousy boyfriends.

Monica was feeling a vague sense of disquiet, but that night as soon as she went to bed with Chandler, both of them had nothing on their hormone-filled brains except each other.

The next morning the happy couple was too exhausted to even move, but as he woke up next to Monica Chandler thought to himself, { _No more fear of commitment. No more thoughts of Chandler-shaped holes in the front door, if she mentions marriage and babies. She's the one! I'm getting a ring, and asking her to marry me. Okay, now I can have that heart attack!_ }

* * *

><p>The previous night

Ross came out of a bar, having decided to drown his sorrows, just as Jerry Seinfeld came out of an all-night convenience store. Ross was more than a little drunk, but still recognized him. "Jerry!"

"Ross? Ross Geller?" Jerry was surprised to recognize his old high school friend, as they came towards each other on the street. "Is that really you?"

"Yep!" he replied drunkenly. "Hey, how you doin'?"

Jerry shrugged. "I'm doing okay. You?"

Ross didn't answer, he just started to giggle. "You are SO lucky I'm not Joey!"

Jerry was confused. "Who?" Then he said in amusement, "Oh yeah, you're really drunk. You want I should take you home?"

Ross collapsed unconscious, and Jerry caught him before he hit the pavement. "Oh, man! Come on," he groaned, and dragged Ross to his apartment building down the street.

The next day, Ross woke up on Jerry's couch, utterly confused and with a killer hangover. Jerry came out of his bedroom and said wryly, "Welcome back to the land of the living."

"Jerry?" Ross said in amazement. "Jerry Seinfeld? Ouch," he winced in pain, holding his head. "Oh, right...uh, thanks for...y'know..."

"Don't mention it." Jerry went to his kitchen, and got Ross something to drink. "I hear they say breakfast is the most important meal of the day. So try this."

Ross looked at the thick, red-colored drink and said, "What's in it?"

Jerry shook his head. "Trust me. You really don't want to know."

Ross shrugged, and gulped it all down. He then started to choke, and his face turned white. Jerry shook his head again and said, "I told ya you didn't wanna know! Bathroom's over there."

Ross stumbled away, and the intercom for the front door of the building went off. Jerry went to answer it, "Hello?"

"It's me," said the muffled voice of George Costanza.

"Come on up," said Jerry, and buzzed him in. He then went to make himself a sandwich, whistling tunelessly and a few minutes later George came in. "Hey. What's up?"

Jerry looked at him. "I met someone last night, he stayed over on the couch. Actually, you know him."

George looked confused. "Who is it?"

Just then Ross came out of the bathroom. "George?" he said in astonishment.

"Ross?"

"Jerry?" Jerry said with a big grin.

"I don't believe it!" George said, and gave Ross a hearty handshake. "I haven't seen in you in years! Not since high school!"

Ross' head was still aching. "Please, no, monster headache!"

Just then, Jerry's neighbor and friend Cosmo Kramer burst into the apartment with a loud yell and a twisting motion, causing Ross more

pain than ever. "HEY! Guys! Guess what? Kramerica Industries has just been reborn!" He then started eating Jerry's sandwich.

George and Jerry rolled their eyes and threw up their hands. "Kramer, not this again!" said Jerry.

"You better believe it, buddy! I'm on my way back up to the top! I gotta go, I got a million things to do. See ya Jerry, George..." his gaze went to Ross, "strange guy I don't know!" He then rushed out the door, and closed it with a bang.

Ross wasn't sure if he was trapped in a nightmare. "Who was that?"

Jerry shrugged. "Oh, that was Kramer."

"Who's Kramer?"

Jerry stared at George, who simply shook his head and looked away. "Ohhh, looks like that's gonna be a LONG story. C'mon, let's go have breakfast and we'll catch up."

* * *

><p>Later at Monk's coffee shop, the three men were talking about old times, and Ross was feeling a lot better. "Hey, do you remember how we all met at JFK High?" asked Ross.<p>

"I don't wanna talk about that!" George said sharply. "I do NOT want to hear another story about how I fell on Jerry's head!"

Ross shrugged, and then all of a sudden saw a girl he recognized come over to them. "Oh my God, BONNIE?"

The woman only gave him a brief glance. "Hello, Ross." She then turned her attention to Jerry. "Jerry, this just isn't working out. I'm sorry, but we're over."

Jerry just shrugged, and kept on eating from his packet of junior mints. "Okay."

Ross just watched in amazement as she left. "Aren't you going after her?" he asked his friend.

George answered instead, "What for? He gets a new girlfriend every week!"

Ross just shook his head. "I am having a VERY strange day."

Jerry looked at him with sympathy. "Well, we've had a strange year, so don't let it bother you."

Ross pulled himself up and said, "Oh, yeah, I saw you on TV back then! You and George...and that Kramer guy! And that lady..."

"Elaine." Jerry and George said together.

"Yeah. Did you really go to jail for a year? For doing nothing?"

"Oh no," Jerry leaned back, "we appealed, Elaine got out after 3 months. The rest of us got out after four."

"Why's that?"

"Solitary confinement. I'm telling ya, those guys in prison REALLY didn't appreciate my sets, or stand-up comedy at all." Jerry leaned forward. "But, enough about us. What about you? And how's your sister? Uh, Monique...Marjorie...?"

"Monica. Yeah, she's good. She's got a boyfriend and a great job now, so she's happy."

George continued, "What about that girl you were always talkin' about, Raquel? Rapunzel?"

"Rachel. She's doing okay too, she, uh, works in fashion."

George looked at Jerry. Both of them recognized the 'ultimately bad ex-girlfriend' look on Ross' face, but decided not to say anything. Ross then proceeded to tell them about his life.

Eventually, inevitably, he started talking about his three divorces. "I mean, the first one ran away 'cause she was a lesbian, the next one left after she decided she couldn't trust me, and the last one decided that the marriage was a drunken mistake? God, my whole life is pathetic!"

George shrugged. "Coulda been worse."

Ross looked at him in amazement, as no one had said this to him before. "How?"

George adjusted his glasses. "Well, with my luck, all three of them would have run off with each other!"

Both Jerry and Ross stared at him. Then Ross burst out laughing, his first laugh since he had heard what his friends thought about him the previous day. "Thanks George," he spluttered, "I needed to hear that."

"That's okay, you're welcome."

Ross then told them about his son Ben, and the two men told him they thought he ought to spend a lot more time with the boy. Just then, Elaine came in and sat down, squeezing herself into the booth. "Hey, guys..." She smiled very briefly at Ross. "Who's this?"

Jerry did the introductions. "Elaine Bennes, this is Ross Geller, old high school friend. Ross, Elaine."

"Nice to meet you."

"Ditto."

"Jerry, weren't you and her...?"

"Yeah, but that was years ago."

George put in, "I promise you Ross, friendship and sex can NOT be

mixed! My deceased fiancée Susan and I were proof of that!"

Elaine seemed depressed, and Jerry asked her what was wrong. She said morosely, "It's David Puddy. We broke up."

"Again?" George asked in disbelief.

"It's really over this time! I think he's left the country."

Jerry seemed surprised. "What happened?"

"We had this huge fight about him not being jailworthy."

"Huh?" said Ross.

"Well, one time he came on a conjugal visit when the four of us were in prison and I told him no, that day he just wasn't spongeworthy! I mean, I needed all the sponges I could get, they don't make that birth control device anymore!"

Ross was still confused, but nonetheless tried to comfort her. "Don't worry, he probably wasn't your lobster anyway."

The others all looked at Ross and said, "Huh?", "What?", "Lobster?"

Ross slapped his forehead in annoyance. "I've been listening to Phoebe too much! I, uh, just meant one day you'll meet the right guy..." he said, casting a look at Jerry thoughtfully.

* * *

><p>Three weeks later

Ross Geller was very busy over the next few weeks, lecturing at NYU and spending a lot more time with Ben, to the great delight of his son. In his 'spare' time he hung around with Jerry, George, Elaine and Kramer, who had accepted him into their little group.

Ross even befriended Newman, the overweight mailman who lived down the hall from Jerry and Kramer, so all six of them slowly started to hang out together.

Of course, all that time spent with these people meant he had to give up something - and the bottom line was, Ross no longer hung out with his other five friends.

Oddly enough, only his sister Monica noticed, and even that was just a vague hunch something was wrong. The first weekend after the conversation in Central Perk, she went to borrow something from his apartment, and no one was there.

After that she had tried to call him, there had been one or two conversations via answering machines, but her job and Chandler too often otherwise occupied her mind.

Chandler was no help; he had his own problems, with the WENUS and the ANUS at his workplace. Besides, the engagement ring he had finally bought for Monica was burning a hole in his pocket, and he still hadn't found the courage to propose to her.

Joey was busy with work, and so was Rachel; and Phoebe was now enrolled in a course for aromatherapy, which her new psychic had advised her to try.

Thus life went on, and on this particular day Joey and Rachel found themselves sitting alone in Central Perk. "I'm bored, Rach! Where is everybody?" Joey whined to his friend.

Rachel shrugged. "I dunno, Joey, maybe they..."

Suddenly, Monica and Chandler came walking in and joined them. "Hey!" they said and sat down.

"Hey," "Hello," the others replied.

Suddenly Phoebe came charging in, hair flying. "OOH! I have the best news! I have the best news!"

"What, is this about your campaign to help save the Brazilian fire ants?" asked Chandler nervously.

"No!" Phoebe seemed momentarily distracted. "But I can tell you about that later."

"Please!" said Chandler sarcastically. "It really scores right up there with reading my mother's books, and watching my dad performing as a gay burlesque dancer..."

Monica slapped him playfully, and he muttered to himself, "Freakishly strong is right..."

Phoebe then told them one of her classmates had given her free tickets to a sold-out concert. "How many?" asked Joey immediately.

"Enough for all of us to go!" she said happily, and started handing them out. "Let's see, one for me, one for Rachel, one for Joey, one for Chandler, one for Monica and one for Ro..." She suddenly stopped. "Hey, where's Ross?"

The others all looked at each other. They said, "Um...", "Don't know...", "Haven't seen him..."

Suddenly, Rachel realized that Ross hadn't been there with them for a VERY long time. { _Oh my God, how long HAS it been since he was here?_ } "Is he overseas again?"

"No," Monica said. "I was in his apartment yesterday..."

"Borrowin' money from him again?" Joey asked with a grin.

Monica glared and hit him with a magazine. "I could smell his dirty laundry. He's here, but I haven't actually seen him for ages..."

"How long has it been?" asked Rachel.

"What, a month?" put in Joey.

"And nobody noticed?" asked Phoebe. All five had nothing to say, but they knew it was true. "What's going on?" she continued. "Has he abandoned us?"

"NO!" Monica said vehemently. "He's just...he's just..."

"ABANDONED us!" said Joey in a panic.

"Come on, we're his friends, his bosom buddies! The...buddies of his bosom..." said Chandler, hopelessly trying to calm things down. "Who else would he be hanging out with?"

"I don't know, but I'm gonna find out!" said Monica grimly, getting up and heading out of Central Perk. Chandler just looked at the others, and followed her.

* * *

><p>Chandler quickly caught up with the one true love of his life, and they checked out Ross' apartment with no luck. After no one responded at the door when he shouted, "Ross, come on! Hey, I've got free porn!" they went in and quickly left, and started scoping out the street.<p>

Chandler was nervous, and wanted to get Monica's mind off her worries. He felt the engagement ring in his pocket again and decided enough was enough, he had to pop the question. Never mind the circumstances, if he didn't do this now, he might never do it. "Monica, I...will you..."

Monica stopped in front of a TV store, mouth open in shock. "Look!"

They both saw the impossible; it was a broadcast of a New York Yankees baseball game, and Ross, Jerry, George, Elaine, Kramer and Newman were on TV. Ross had just caught a home run, and was jumping up and down with his friends.

Monica quickly took off. Chandler looked at the TV and said, "And there you go! Why, Lord, why?" looking up at the sky, before catching up with Monica.

A few minutes later, the party of five was again gathered at Central Perk. "Ross has new friends?" Rachel said in shock.

"Yeah!" said Chandler and Monica together.

"Well, we gotta get him back!" said Joey.

"But hey, why'd he do it?" asked Phoebe to no one in particular. "I mean, why did this happen? 'Cause we didn't do anything, right?"

None of them had noticed Gunther, who had come to pick up their empty coffee mugs for the chance to be near his beloved Rachel. But they most certainly noticed it when he snorted in amusement and shook his head, on hearing Phoebe's remark.

Rachel said, "Gunther, what do you know about this?"

Gunther went pale, and stammered, "M-me? Not a thing. I-I just work here. I see nothing, I know nothing..." he tried to back away, but found Joey and Chandler blocking the way.

Rachel grabbed him by the lapels. "Gunther! Talk!"

The poor man had to tell her - it was physically AND psychologically impossible for him to deny her anything. "Oh my God, what have we done?" asked Rachel, releasing him.

"You insulted him in front of his back, and now he wants nothing to do with any of you?" Gunther said, trying not to sound hopeful. Then he almost sprinted away, in case they wanted to kill him.

But the five friends were too consumed with the shock of what they'd learned. They had totally forgotten about that conversation, but now it all came back. "Dear Lord, it's no wonder he's been avoiding us!" said Chandler, as they all sat down again.

"Joey's right, we gotta get him back!" said Monica firmly.

"How?" asked Phoebe.

"Simple!" said Joey brightly. "Get Rachel to sleep with him."

"JOEY!" the girls all yelled. Joey tried to hide behind Chandler from the three women, but it was no use.

"OW! All right, all right, so she doesn't actually have to do the deed, uh...she can just show up naked in his apartment, sayin' it's for the anniversary of their first date or somethin'! He'll never be able to resist her, whatever she asks!"

Chandler looked hopeful. "Knowing Ross, that might actually work!"

Rachel looked indignant. "I am so not doing that!"

Monica said, "Look, we just gotta talk to him, face to face..."

Chandler cut her off. "Uh, Mon? Y'know, he hasn't even wanted to see our faces for the past month - somehow, I don't think that's gonna work!"

His girlfriend got mad at him. "You're not helping!"

* * *

><p>At that same moment in Jerry Seinfeld's apartment, Ross, George and Jerry were having a beer. Ross said, "It was so great to actually meet Mr. Steinbrenner!"<p>

George winced. "You're lucky the guy at the gate owed me a favor. Jerry, when we got in there the man hadn't changed one bit, I swear to God!"

"Still a great conversationalist, huh?" smirked Jerry. Elaine buzzed from downstairs, and Jerry went to let her in.

"He went on and on and on and on..." George said, screwing up his face.

Ross said in confusion, "I didn't think he was like that! I mean, it seemed to me like he was a really nice guy. Hey, are we getting something to eat?"

All of a sudden Kramer came in, sliding open the door and skidding to a halt in Jerry's apartment. "Hello!"

"Hey," "hi," came the replies.

Kramer cringed, then made a weird noise and hand signals, cutting them off. "We still on for later?" he asked Ross.

"Yeah..."

"Okay, I gotta go. The K-Man's work here is done!" and he scooted out the door.

Ross said, "I will never get used to that!"

Jerry said, "You think we have?"

Elaine came in. "Hey, Ross! Jerry, George. We still meeting at Ross' place today?"

"Yeah."

She went up to him and said, "So Ross, first time we're all coming over, huh? It's gonna be a special event!" Ross instantly looked nervous, and so she took pity on him and told him not to worry, it was gonna be fine.

Suddenly Newman burst in, desperately seeking help. "HELP!" he cried.

"What's up?" asked George.

"My job! My job!"

"What?" everyone asked.

"I need someone to do my rounds - I just got word of a surprise inspection by the US Postmaster General! I haven't prepared! I'm a million light years from prepared! Somebody, help me!"

Ross calmed him down. "Uh, okay, I got some time, I can do it."

Newman beamed and almost hugged him, and then dragged him away to put on the mailman's uniform. "Come on! Hurry!"

Then the phone started ringing. "Hello?" said Jerry, picking it up. He looked at George. "Hey, it's for you."

George listened, said a few "yessirs", and then excitedly hung up and went to grab his coat. "What's going on?" asked Jerry.

"That was Steinbrenner! He wants to see me! I gotta go! This could be something big, Jerry!" and he left.

Elaine said, "I'm leaving too, I'm gonna keep Ross company."

"Oh, really," Jerry said nonchalantly. "Hmm, you guys are good friends to do that!"

Elaine looked at him and said grinning, "Jerry, are you jealous?"

Jerry could not help grinning too, and made a 'forget-it' motion with his hand. "Ah, you know me, I'm always jealous of everybody!" Elaine just laughed and left.

* * *

><p>Elaine and Ross were walking and talking, and somehow the conversation wound up on the subject of Jerry and Elaine's romantic history.<p>

Ross knew he wasn't the best person to give relationship advice, not given his three divorces, but when he heard that Elaine was going to say she'd always loved Jerry when their plane was about to crash, he told her to just tell him already and get it all out in the open.

By a curious coincidence Rachel was walking along the street, when she saw Ross in his mailman's uniform and talking with Elaine. She couldn't believe it - had he found someone else, after he'd left her and the rest of his friends behind?

{ _I am not jealous!_ } she immediately thought to herself. { _I was NOT jealous when Ross went out with my sister. And just because Ross is over there now enjoying himself with some beautiful woman, that does NOT mean I'm jealous of her!_ }

Well, to be honest, her feelings about Ross had always been complicated, after she'd found out he had loved her ever since they were teenagers. And everyone knew the history between them had been pretty turbulent, with everything from pure love to near-hate, and a roller coaster of get-togethers and break-ups thrown in for good measure.

Rachel started to follow them, then stopped, wondering what on earth she was doing. Instead she went back to her apartment, where her four friends had gathered for an important council of war on what to do about Ross Geller.

* * *

><p>Later in Monica and Chandler's apartment, everyone was there apart from Rachel. Monica was staring out the window down at the street, looking for Ross. Then she saw him. "There he is. Ross is entering his building!"<p>

Chandler couldn't help saying, "And, is there any chance that Elvis has left the building?"

"Chandler!"

Chandler simply shrugged, and got on the phone to Ross' apartment. "Hello, Rachel? It's me, Chandler. Yeah, Ross is on his way up. Good luck." He hung up and said to Joey, "Well, I guess it's all up to her now."

Joey looked frustrated. "I still think she should be gettin' naked to make Ross get over all of this!"

"Oh - my - God!" Phoebe said, watching Ross' apartment through binoculars. "She IS getting naked!"

Joey couldn't help himself; his eyes bulged out and he rushed to have a look. "Does that apartment make EVERYBODY get naked?"

Phoebe smacked him on the head and told him not to look. "She's not getting naked for YOU, you pervert!"

Monica's attention had started to wander, and Chandler finally worked up his courage to ask her to marry him again. He said, "Mon?"

"Yeah, honey?"

"Monica, I love you. You know that, right?"

She flashed him a quick smile. "Of course I know that, Chandler! Why?"

Chandler started to say, "Mon, sweetheart, I..." when she gave a small gasp. "What is it?"

"Ross is coming out again!"

Monica watched as her brother waited outside the building, and a car parked in front of him. She then gasped again as he greeted the occupants, and the six people went inside. "Ross has got company!"

Chandler desperately tried to ring Rachel to warn her, but he had no chance of success - she had unplugged the phone and drawn the curtains, because she didn't want any interruptions.

Rachel wasn't sure exactly what was going to happen when Ross came in, or why she had decided to follow Joey's advice on how to bring Ross back into his old circle of friends. But she knew she had to do SOMETHING.

Later, she would try to rationalize it as just seeming like a good idea at the time, or that it was simply temporary insanity.

But deep down, she had finally admitted the truth to herself - she missed him, she wanted him back, and she didn't want him hanging around those people anymore. So, she had to do whatever was necessary.

Outside the apartment, Ross and his five friends were at the door. Key in hand, Ross started to give a little talk about how glad he was to have them over, that he hoped they'd like it, and would want to come again. "Skip the speech, Ross!" Kramer said urgently. "I need to get the taste of those fresh papayas you got into my mouth!"

Ross shrugged - it occurred to him that he was doing that a lot these days - and opened the door, and they all started to go in.

"HAPPY ANNIVERS - AGHHHHH!" screamed Naked Rachel, dropping her outstretched arms as the six surprised people that came in stared at her, with mouths wide open. She quickly tried to cover herself up, and most of the men started grinning.

"Ohhh mama," smirked Kramer.

Rachel dived behind the couch, reaching for her clothes. Glaring at Ross and horribly embarrassed, she demanded, "What are all these people doing in your apartment?"

Jerry said philosophically, "I ask myself that very same question every day!"

George said admiringly, "Ross, I gotta hand it to ya, this beats the first time at my place hands down!"

Elaine casually agreed, "Yeah, mine too. Hey miss, how much do they pay you to do this sorta stuff nowadays?"

"WHAT?" screamed Rachel.

Ross said nervously, "Uh, no, this is my friend Rachel..."

All five said at the same time, "THE Rachel?" Ross just looked embarrassed and nodded.

Newman smiled and said to her hopefully, "If you're interested, I'd love to show you my new recipe for jambalaya!"

Rachel said to her ex-husband, "Ross, will you please get these people out of here?"

Ross shrugged again and said to them, "Uh, sorry about this - but I-I-I guess we'll have to do it some other time..."

They all started to move towards the door, but after Kramer and Newman had grabbed the papayas. George said, "Jerry, no doubt about it - next time at my place, I gotta have a naked Rachel!"

"OUT!" she screamed.

They left and Ross shut the door, and then turned to look at her, partly amused. "Well Rachel, I...it's been a while - uh, it's nice to see you, and I-I do mean ALL of you..."

Rachel was still very agitated, as she finished putting on her clothes. "What the hell did you invite them here for?"

Ross frowned. "Hey, this is MY place - so what the hell were YOU doing here? NAKED?"

Rachel came out from behind the couch, and Ross caught his breath for a moment - in her makeup and brand new designer clothes, she suddenly looked even more beautiful than he remembered. "I - that is, we - we know now why you've been avoiding us, Ross," she said in a suddenly quiet tone.

Ross couldn't help it, he suddenly got angry. "I don't want to talk about that."

Rachel tried to explain anyway. "Look Ross, about what we - uh, what I said that day, I..."

Ross shouted, "I don't wanna hear it! You - you broke into my place, you embarrassed me in front of my new friends, and I-I can't deal with this right now. Just leave, Rachel, please!"

Rachel didn't say anything, she just gave him the key and headed for the door. Before she left though, she said softly, "I'm sorry, Ross - for all of us."

Ross just stared as she closed the door behind her.

* * *

><p>The next day, Ross was preparing breakfast at his place when Kramer burst in, in exactly the same way he did at Jerry's apartment. "Ah, konichiwa!"<p>

Ross thought, { _Is he speaking Japanese?_ } "Hey, Kramer. Are you okay? You look sorta..."

The man made a strange motion with his hands. "Ohhh, I'm wired, Ross! I am definitely OUT THERE!"

"What's up?" Ross asked curiously.

"Everything, Ross, everything's changed now!"

"What?"

"Everyone's gone!"

Ross was fascinated to hear Kramer's explanation. "George was rehired by Steinbrenner, and he said it was all because of you! He's gone to California, on some business for the Yankees!"

"But I..."

"And Newman got a promotion, 'cause you helped him! He's been transferred to Hawaii, we're talking grass skirts, margaritas and he's lovin' every minute of it!"

"What about Elaine and Jerry?" Ross asked.

"They eloped!" Kramer quickly showed him the handwritten notes he had found shoved under his door, one for Ross and one for himself.

Ross read how they wanted to thank him for getting them back together again, after all these years. "Amazing...so, it's just you and me here?" he asked Kramer.

The man violently shook his head, "I'm going to Washington! Kramerica Industries just got bought out, and I'm now on the board of one of the biggest companies in America with time-share in Acapulco!"

Ross was completely shocked. Kramer went on to say, "Yeah, and we have to have lunch together when you move to Washington too!"

"Huh?"

"Oh! Well, I got you a job! With Dennis Stanford, y'know, that chairman of the board guy at the Smithsonian, that you mentioned?"

Ross was now even more dumbfounded. "Kramer, he's like the top archaeologist in the country! How could you possibly arrange something like that?"

"Oh, I had my executive assistant do it when I was on the phone at 2 o'clock this morning!" He then grinned and said in a manic voice, "Washington, Ross! Giddy-up!" before he whirled around and left.

Ross just stood there, wondering what to do.

* * *

><p>Later at Monica and Chandler's apartment, everyone had come over for breakfast and was listening to Rachel, who was crying and explaining what had happened the previous day. "Then he threw me out - he, he hates us! And it's all my fault!"<p>

"How do ya figure that?" asked Joey in puzzlement.

"I should have kept my big mouth shut!" Chandler had to open his mouth to say something, but when he saw Monica's expression he stepped back in terror and closed it again.

Rachel continued, "I mean, I started all this! If I hadn't said anything after Joey mentioned that Knicks game, nobody else would have said any of those horrible things, and Ross would be here right now, and I...I..." she started crying again.

Monica tried to comfort her, but it was no use. Rachel had the horrible feeling Ross was gone forever - in more ways than one, for her.

"Does this have anythin' to do with that time o' month?" Joey queried Chandler in confusion, and then shuddered in fear from the triple female glare. "Just askin'!"

Suddenly, there was a knock at the door. Out of habit Rachel got up and opened it, still sniffing.

Ross was there. He asked quietly, "Can I come in?"

She said "Yes!" immediately, he did so and everybody crowded around, trying to apologize.

"It's okay!" he said over the babble of voices. "Look, guys, I got some things to tell you." He then told them Kramer's news and everyone went silent, assuming that he was about to say he was leaving. But Ross surprised them. "So I decided - I, I'm not gonna take the job. I'm staying here in New York."

"Because of Ben?" asked Phoebe.

"It's not just him," Ross replied. "It's everything. Including - all of you. Look, what you said hurt, but I-I got over it a while ago. And I guess I...I suddenly realized that I-I-I've missed you. You guys, you're not only my friends, you're also my family. I can't go if it means losing you. No way."

Instantly there was a giant group hug, except for Rachel, who stayed away out of shame. Ross broke the hug and went up to her and said, "Rach, what I said yesterday, the way I spoke to you...I, I'm sorry. Can you forgive me?"

She burst into tears again, embracing him tightly and kissing him. "Only if you forgive me first!"

Chandler couldn't take it anymore. "Oh, for the love of..." He brought out the ring and got down on his knees. "Monica, will you marry me?"

She screamed out, "Heck, yes!" before putting on the ring and kissing Chandler like there was no tomorrow.

Joey and Phoebe started jumping up and down together for joy. "Hooray! Hooray! Everything's okay, everything's back to normal again!"

****THE END****

End
file.